

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EC FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN THE THE HAGUE, OCT 30, 1976:
PREVIEW

REF: (A) EC BRUSSELS 10332, (B) THE HAGUE 5942

1. SUMMARY: THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS' INFORMAL MEETING IN THE HAGUE OCT 30, WHICH HAD INITIALLY BEEN SCHEDULED FOR A DISCUSSION OF THE TINDEMANS REPORT, WILL DEAL ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY WITH FISHERIES PROBLEMS. PERDEL SOURCES ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT MINISTERS WILL BE ABLE TO RESOLVE THE IMPASSE OVER 200- MILE LIMITS AND THIRD-COUNTRY FISHING NEGOTIATIONS WHICH AROSE AT THEIR OCTOBER 18-19 COUNCIL MEETING. END SUMMARY.

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2. FOLLOWING FAILURE OF THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS TO

REACH AGREEMENT ON EC FISHERIES POLICY AT ITS OCTOBER 18-19 COUNCIL MEETING (REFTEL), THE EC COMMISSION AND MEMBER STATE DELEGATIONS HAVE CONDUCTED A SERIES OF SPECIAL MEETINGS TO SEEK A COMPROMISE ACCEPTABLE TO IRELAND AND TO OTHER MEMBER STATES. ACTING COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS GUNDELACH RETURNED TODAY (OCT 29) FROM A TWO-DAY VISIT WITH IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER FITZGERALD IN DUBLIN AND TABLED A NEW FORMULA AT A SPECIAL COREPER MEETING. IF IT SURVIVES TODAY'S ONGOING REVIEW IN BRUSSELS, THE FORMULA WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN THE HAGUE TOMORROW. IF THE COMPROMISE IS ACCEPTABLE, SOME OF OUR SOURCES BELIEVE THE FOREIGN MINISTERS MAY TRANSFORM THEIR INFORMAL MEETING INTO A REGULAR COUNCIL SESSION IN ORDER TO ISSUE A DECLARATION ON THE EXTENSION BY MEMBER STATES OF THEIR FISHING ZONES TO 200 MILES BY JANUARY 1, 1977, AND ON APPROVAL OF THE DIRECTIVES FOR THIRD COUNTRY FISHING NEGOTIATIONS. (COMMENT: THE NORMAL PROCEDURE WOULD BE FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTERS, IF THEY SHOULD REACH A DECISION IN THEIR INFORMAL MEETING, TO REGULARIZE THEIR DECISION AS AN COUNCIL ACT BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE THROUGH THE COUNCIL SECRETARIAT.)

3. THERE APPEARS TO BE CONSIDERABLE OPTIMISM AMONG OUR PERMDEL SOURCES THAT THE NEW FORMULA WILL MEET IRISH DEMANDS FOR SOME SORT OF CONCRETE GUARANTEES FOR ITS SMALL FISHING INDUSTRY EVEN THOUGH ITS CLAIM FOR A 50- MILE EXCLUSIVE FISHING ZONE IS MOST UNLIKELY TO BE ACCEPTED. AN IRISH PERMDEL OFFICIAL FLET THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD ACCEPT ANY ARRANGEMENT WHICH WOULD ASSURE A REASONABLE EXPANSION OF IRELAND'S SMALL ANNUAL FISH PRODUCTION. A UK PERMDEL OFFICIAL COMMENTED THAT THERE IS A STRONG POLITICAL WILL ON THE PART OF EVERYONE TO REACH A COMPROMISE AND THAT IT IS MOST UNLIKELY THAT COMMISSIONER GUNDELACH WOULD HAVE AGREED TO A FORMULA IN DUBLIN WHICH HE KNEW WOULD CLEARLY NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE MEMBER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATES. SHE FELT THAT, WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF ITALY, MOST MEMBER STATES ARE PREPARED TO BE GENEROUS TO THE IRISH.

4. WHILE TRYING TO RESOLVE THE BASIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF FISHERIES POLICY, THE COMMUNITY HAS AT THE SAME TIME BEEN MAKING PROGRESS ON THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS. A WORKING PARTY OF THE

SPECIAL COUNCIL AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE HAS REVIEWED THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS AND HAS AGREED THAT THESE ARE TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE, PARTICULARLY THOSE FOR FISHERY CONSERVATION, FOR CONTROLLING FISHING ACTIVITY IN THE EXTENDED EC ZONES, AND FOR SUPER-VISING ON-SHORE FISH MARKETING. THE EC AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS DURING THEIR OCTOBER 25/26 SESSION TOOK NOTE OF THIS AGREEMENT AND ASKED THE WORKING PARTY TO PROCEED WITH ITS STUDIES.

5. TINDEMANS REPORT: WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE MINISTERS WILL MAKE AN EFFORT TO DISCUSS THE TINDEMANS REPORT AS SOON AS THEY HAVE COMPLETED THEIR TALKS ON FISHERIES PROBLEMS. WITH THE NOV 29-30 EUROPEAN COUNCIL APPROACHING, THE MINISTERS HAVE LITTLE TIME LEFT TO COMPLETE THEIR REVIEW OF THE REPORT. THEY HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO DISCUSS CHAPTER II (EUROPE IN THE WORLD), CHAPTER III (EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES), AND CHAPTER V (STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTIONS), BUT IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THEY WILL MAKE MUCH PROGRESS ON THIS DOSSIER. HINTON

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